

# bulletin

Virginia Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter

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## What's changed? A lot, say VDOT's seasoned veterans

As VDOT nears its 100th birthday, we asked senior VDOT employees across the state to describe how their work and the department had changed during their careers. The question was:

"What has changed the most since you began working for VDOT?"



Pat Bruce

**Pat Bruce**, *public relations and marketing specialist, Public Affairs Office, Salem District, 39 years of service:*

"Miss Highway was something that VDOT did right after I came here. It's something that you wouldn't dare do now. At that time, though, it was a great honor to be selected Miss Highway. It was special just to get to represent your area, and it was something fun for us to do.

"I was chosen Miss Salem District in 1967, but a redhead in the Bristol District beat me out for Miss Highway. Miss Highway was chosen once a year and the winner traveled around the state in her crown and sash for road openings, ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings. Several people would vie for the position. We had to write an essay and answer questions from judges. The winner was crowned at the Employee Benefit Association's annual Christmas dance, and you wore a long gown. My husband-to-be was my escort, but since we weren't married, we had to have a chaperone. His boss and his boss' wife went as our chaperones.

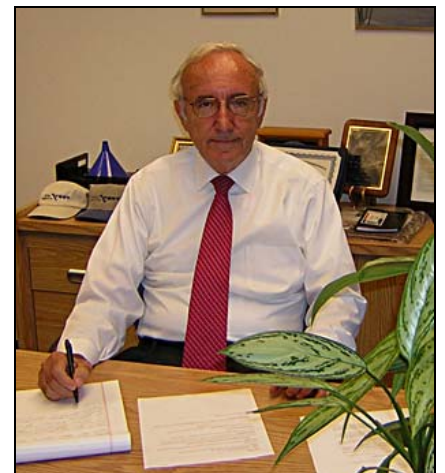
"One other footnote for fun: I drove my '57 Chevy on I-81 before it was ever opened, and got it up to 100 mph!"

**Gene Hull**, *deputy Northern Virginia District administrator, 49 years of service:*

"When I began working for VDOT, it was just about to celebrate its 50th birthday and here I am five decades later ready to celebrate our agency's centennial. Over the past 49 years I have seen the birth of the interstate system (quite possibly the single greatest transportation achievement of all time), and I have had the honor and privilege to help build one of Virginia's first interstate highways, I-81.

"In addition, I had the opportunity to work on other interstate projects, including the Springfield Interchange. When this project was originally constructed, it carried approximately 25,000 vehicles per day. Today's traffic volumes are approaching 450,000 vehicles through the construction zone, a feat I could not have ever imagined. Nevertheless, this is happening as we rebuild the interchange for a second time.

"Throughout all of our advances, one thing has remained constant: the honest, hardworking men and women of VDOT, who give their all to keep Virginia safe and moving."



Gene Hull



*Willis Blevins*

**Willis Blevins**, *project manager, Right of Way Section, Bristol District, 44 years of service:*

“Some of the major changes have been salaries, employee benefits and working conditions. We paid for all of our insurance and retirement benefits ourselves. Supplies were tight. You were provided only a No. 3 pencil; and if you needed an ink pen, you had to provide it. The management style was much more military then, too.

“The use of outside contractors has changed the way we think of VDOT. In the past, everyone doing the department’s work--on the highway or in the office--was in the VDOT family. Of course, snow removal equipment was mostly manual. A man stood in the bed of a truck shoveling cinders out on the snow.”

**William Diggs**, *transportation operations manager I, Amherst sub-area, Lynchburg District, 30 years of service:*

“We have much better resources now to help us get our jobs done. Technology has come a long way. Our equipment is more technical too, but it’s easier to learn than some of the

older pieces we had. We can operate equipment by using push buttons. Where we once had manual controls on the floor to turn snow plows; now it’s just a push of a button.

“We have also become more modernized in the way we work, particularly in traffic control and safety. We have more signs to alert motorists, and those signs are easier to handle and are made of new materials. Because of that, we have fewer injuries to motorists and to our own personnel. We have fewer men, but we are using our equipment more efficiently to get jobs done. Once we get to the worksite with our equipment, we’re ready to go. Equipment is set up with quick coupling and other timesaving devices. So, we can get started faster and we can finish quicker.”



*Williams Diggs*



*Bob Moore*

**Bob Moore**, *Culpeper District maintenance engineer, 44 years of service:*

“The number of construction inspectors has changed drastically, from several on small projects to large numbers on the big projects on the interstate. I worked on I-95 (now I-395) at the Pentagon in the early 1970s, with an average of 35 inspectors. I believe the quality of work is as good now as it was then. Currently in our district, most of our inspectors handle more than one project each, including secondary contracts and resurfacing schedules. This makes for a very mobile employee, moving from one location to another, while utilizing the ‘phase inspection’ concept.

“Finally, there are a lot of VDOT personnel, both management and others, with tremendous workloads and stress as compared to 30 and 40 years ago. Occasionally you will see someone who is not overloaded with work, but a higher percentage of employees have heavier workload--and higher expectations to complete that work today--as compared to the past.”

**Robert Pickett**, *environmental manager, Fredericksburg District, 31 years of service:*

“Almost everything has changed in our field. When I began, a straw bale was state of the art for erosion and sediment control. Now there are multiple products on the market for it, including silt fences (which VDOT helped develop) and different geo-technical fabrics. There also are professional journals written on erosion, storm water management and other topics. Those didn’t exist decades ago.

"We had two people to cover the state. Their reports tended to be broad rather than specific, sometimes with only a single page to describe field work. Now we have in-house staff, as well as consultants, to do these assessments in a more thorough and professional manner. In wetland mitigation, we made quick assumptions about which properties were suitable for wetlands replacement. Now, we do extensive ground-water monitoring and other evaluations before buying a property. The possibility of hazardous materials in a future right of way was increasingly troubling in the 1980s, and in the 1990s it became imperative to find out if a proposed right of way was dirty or clean. In-house staff and consultants now do a professional job of those evaluations. Care of animal habitats and endangered species also has been a high priority. Our wildlife crossings and studies of them are one indicator of that.



*Robert Pickett*



“Of course, the whole regulatory umbrella became much more overarching in all areas, spurring our progress. We’ve added to our knowledge, developed our expertise, and managed our data much more efficiently. We have a much more comprehensive and professional approach to all of this today.”

**Janet Peck**, payroll administrator, Fiscal Section, Hampton Roads District, 35 years of service:

“We have had a lot of positive changes with payroll since I first started in 1970, but even since 1990, we have gone from VDOT doing its own payrolls to going on the statewide payroll system through the Department of Accounts and having Central Office administrate all the payrolls. In 1995, Central Office decentralized the payrolls to the Hampton Roads District, and we are now administrating the payrolls.

“The most recent and significant change we have accomplished is having a paperless paycheck that each employee can access and print out through our Payline program when they need a copy. And, starting with our Oct. 1 paycheck, employees who do not take advantage of the paperless stub will have their checks mailed to them. Yes, I would say we have come a long way in 35 years.”



*Janet Peck*



*Deborah Grant*

**Deborah Grant**, federal programs manager, Programming Division, 25 years of service:

“When I came to VDOT, you didn’t see women in management positions, only in secretarial positions. Now, we have an almost 50-50 ratio of women to men at the chiefs level, and almost a third of our division administrators are women. You can see that same trend in other positions--assistant administrators, section heads and team leaders. You also see more women in engineering, a field that used to be male-dominated at VDOT.

“There are a lot more minorities in upper-level positions, too. Not only have women and minorities advanced, they’ve gained a lot of respect in the department. I think women and men -- as well as minorities and non-minorities -- now have the same opportunities to advance in VDOT.

“Of course, technology has changed. Where we used to use typewriters, we now have computers and laptops. No more typing with carbon paper and using White-Out for corrections. Also, very few memorandums are done. Most communication is through e-mail.”

**Miles Pierce**, construction inspector, Ashland Residency, 40 years of service:



*Miles Pierce*

“I began my career with VDOT in 1965 on a survey party. At that time field computations were done with a pencil, legal pad and mechanical calculator. I am currently an assistant to the residency administrator in Ashland, responsible for directing the maintenance program. I use a PC, PDA, and cell phone. The biggest change I have seen in the department is technology across the board. Customer awareness and expectations are a strong second.”

**Stephen Faidley**, engineer technician III, Location & Design Section, Staunton District, 40 years of service:

“Yes, I’ve definitely seen some changes during the past 40 years in Location and Design, both large and small. For example, our section was called 'Drafting' before it became L&D. One of the biggest changes would have to be the

restructurings of the department along the way.

“I’d say the most notable changes occurred between 1960 and 1975. During that era, the section was booming with 55 people. The evolution of technology prompted many of the employees’ functions to become more automated. Now we have about 18 people. We can practically fit everyone into one van when we visit a site. Fortunately, no one was displaced during the restructuring. The changes created opportunities for people to venture into new professional territory in other agency sections. I believe it played a role in creating units such as human resources and public affairs, which had not previously existed.”



*Stephen Faidley*

## **Employees honored with Hero Award**



*Honored for coming to the rescue were (from left) Earnest Mays, Dustin Foley, Jimmy Goad and Frankie Hodge*

VDOT has given its Heroism Award to Dustin Foley, Walter Hodge and Jimmy Goad, crew members in the Fairystone AHQ of Martinsville Residency, for their courageous response to an accident June 6 on Route 58.

The agency also presented its On-The-Spot Award to Earnest Mays, a contract flagger.

The four were working on Lover's Leap Mountain when a tractor-trailer heading down the mountain lost its brakes and crashed through a paving work zone.

Foley, a member of the local fire and rescue squad, rushed to the cab and crawled through a window to give first aid to the driver as the truck was leaking fuel.

Hodge and Goad removed the windshield so the driver could be pulled to safety.

Mays, a flagman at the work site, was cited for notifying crews that an out-of-control truck was headed their way.

## **Compton wins top tech title**

Timmy D. Compton of the Oakwood Shop, Bristol District, was named VDOT's Technician of the Year at the Eighth Annual Equipment Repair Workshop for Supervisors and Managers Aug. 10 in Charlottesville.

"Tim is a very talented person who has the ability to look at a problem or situation and see solutions that other people may not see," stated Erle W. Potter, VDOT's assistant division administrator for equipment, in his nomination of Compton.

Other district winners were Tom Pruett of Salem, Robert W. Adams of Lynchburg, Roger Williams of Richmond, Gary D. Lewis of Hampton Roads, Frank Jerow of Fredericksburg, John (Kevin) Arnold of Culpeper, Timothy W. Teter of Staunton, and Charles E. Suthpin Jr. of Northern Virginia.

## **Katrina donations top \$40,000**

VDOT employees across the state contributed almost \$41,000 to the Combined Virginia Campaign-Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund Drive.

The combined total from all state agencies was more than \$457,000. VDOT's total was the second largest.

## **Four America's Byways Designations for Virginia**

The Federal Highway Administration has announced 45 new America's Byways designations, four of which are in Virginia: the Blue Ridge Parkway, Skyline Drive, Colonial Parkway and George Washington Memorial Parkway.

VDOT's Local Assistance Division helped coordinate the nomination package. It is unusual for a state to receive four designations in one year because most nominations are submitted individually. The designations will help protect the scenic quality and the character of the national scenic roads and market Virginia to tourists.

## **Shucet honored with AASHTO award**

Former Commissioner Philip Shucet has been awarded the annual President's Award by the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials. He was selected from among the 50 states as the winner of the "Highways" category.

During his tenure, Shucet had made VDOT more accountable to the public for completing highway projects on time and within budget. When he became commissioner, only 20 percent of projects were completed on time and only 51 percent were within budget. During his leadership, those percentages rose to 74 percent on time and 82 percent within budget.

Shucet was also cited for the development of the "Dashboard," VDOT's online report of the status of each construction project, which is available to the public. In addition, a new cost-estimating system has narrowed the margin of error for project estimates from 187 percent to 30 percent.

## **VDOT wins national honor for bridge project**

Reconstruction of a bridge over Route 683 and the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks earned VDOT a national quality award. The National Partnership for Highway Quality (NPHQ) gave its 2005 State Award to VDOT, its Staunton District staff and general contractor Fairfield-Skanska Inc.

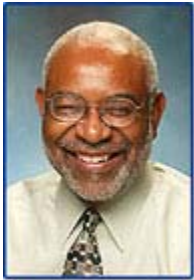
The award cited "a project whose outstanding work exemplifies the best in construction quality and customer-oriented quality practices."

The work, designed to replace a deficient bridge on Route 340 over the Norfolk Southern Railway and Route 683 in southern Page County, was designed entirely in-house by the Staunton District staff. Keith Weakley, P.E., of the Staunton District Bridge Section, was the designer. Charlie Gardner and Les Kodger of Staunton District's Location and Design Section did the road design work.

Completing the project under traffic, without disruption to the railroad or access to adjacent homes, businesses, and farms was a challenge. Nevertheless, the VDOT team constructed just west of the existing structure a new, two-lane 50.5-meter single-span steel-girder bridge--one of the longest in Virginia.

### *News Briefs*

#### ***Jones leads Civil Rights Division***



*Freddie Jones*

Freddie Jones has been named administrator of VDOT's Civil Rights Division. He had been serving as the interim administrator.

Jones has worked in the department for 21 years. Prior to joining VDOT, he worked at a commercial bank, the Metropolitan Business League and the U.S. Department of Commerce. He also had his own consulting firm.

He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Virginia Union University and Virginia State University respectively.

#### ***Brown manages Elizabeth River tunnel facilities***



*Tyrone Brown*

Tyrone Brown will oversee maintenance and operations at the Midtown and Downtown tunnels as well as the Berkley Bridge. Brown joined VDOT in March 2004 as a maintenance superintendent at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel.

Brown most recently served as the acting facility manager of the HRBT. He served in the U.S. Army and holds a bachelor's degree from San Jose State University. Brown succeeds Bruce Wilkerson, who retired in November 2004.

#### ***Beeson overseas Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel***



*Charles Beeson*

Charles Beeson will oversee maintenance and operations at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel on I-64. Beeson comes to VDOT from URS Corp., where he worked at VDOT's Smart Traffic Center in Virginia Beach for the last 13 years. He managed more than 80 contract employees.

Beeson replaces former HRBT Facility Manager Dwayne Cook, who was promoted to district operations manager in March.

#### ***Collier is Norfolk Residency administrator***



*Bill Collier*

Bill Collier will oversee maintenance and construction on interstates and routes in the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach. Collier joined VDOT in 1994 as assistant resident engineer at the Norfolk Residency. He most recently held a 10-month assignment as acting facility manager of the Elizabeth River Tunnels.

Collier graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and served in the Navy aboard the USS San Jacinto and as special projects officer for the commander in chief of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Collier replaces Denis Gribok, who retired in June.





*MacFarland  
Neblett*

### ***Neblett is Waverly administrator***

MacFarland Neblett, P.E., has been named administrator of the Waverly Residency. He will oversee maintenance and construction on interstates and routes in Surry, Sussex, and Isle of Wight counties.

Neblett joined VDOT in 1971 as an engineer trainee. He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Old Dominion University. Neblett succeeds David Steele, who was promoted to Williamsburg area construction engineer in December 2004.



*Joe Lomax*

### ***Lomax is residency administrator at Franklin***

Joe Lomax is the new administrator at the Franklin Residency. He will oversee maintenance and construction on interstates and routes in Southampton and Greensville counties and in a number of towns in southeastern Virginia.

Lomax joined VDOT in 1985 as a survey chainman. He attended Norfolk State University and has held a number of positions within VDOT during his 20-year career. Lomax succeeds Randolph Cook, who retired in June 2005.

### ***Shirley is construction engineer***

Kenneth Shirley, P.E., has been named district construction engineer in Fredericksburg. He had been the residency administrator there since August 2004.

Before joining VDOT, he was at the engineering firm of Carter and Burgess, Inc., and was resident engineer for construction engineering and inspection contracts with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

Shirley also worked for the Texas Department of Transportation. He has a bachelor's in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington, and a master's in management and administrative services from the University of Texas at Dallas.



***1941-1960***

## **Post-war years marked by growth**

*The Virginia Department of Transportation is celebrating its centennial next year. In honor of that anniversary, the Bulletin will feature a series of stories recognizing our contributions to Virginia and to the nation in transportation excellence. This is the third of the series focusing on the decades leading up to 2006.*

## **Roads rebound after another war**

As did World War I, the outbreak of World War II brought a slowdown in Virginia's highway program.

The department soon became handicapped by decreasing manpower, limited materials and a sharp drop in finances. To overcome the shortage, especially for maintenance operations, convict camps were distributed strategically throughout the state. Without this adjusted use of prison labor, it would have been impossible to maintain our highways, especially in the Hampton Roads and Washington metropolitan areas.

### ***Developing a 20-year plan***

But immediately after the war, Commissioner James A. Anderson set about making up for lost time. The Department of Highways developed a 20-year plan for upgrading all of Virginia's roads and replacing all the remaining ferries. The state highway system had grown from its original 4,002 miles in 1918 to 9,459 miles in 1941.



*Commissioner  
James A.  
Anderson*

In addition to working on the 20-year plan, Commissioner Anderson set another standard: "Not a school day lost because of mud." Between 1945 and mid-1947, the unsurfaced secondary mileage was reduced by half. At the end of 1948, not a single school-bus day had been lost because of mud on the roads in two years.

As the 1940s closed, the Henry G. Shirley Memorial Highway, named for one of the department's most esteemed commissioners, was nearing completion. It extended from Woodbridge to Washington, D.C., and represented the most up-to-date highway construction, with limited access, easy grades, light curves and adequate sight distances for a safe speed of 70 mph. It later became part of I-95 and I-395.

### ***Interstate program was massive***

When Congress called for the construction of a 42,500-mile interstate highway system, it was a staggering assignment for the highway departments across the country. The immensity of the interstate system fell swiftly and heavily on Virginia's highway employees when it was announced in 1956.

"We've got a program you've never seen the likes of before," employees remember John Harwood, location and design (L&D) engineer and later commissioner, telling them at a meeting at Natural Bridge.

Harwood, L&D engineer in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was often called the "chief architect" of Virginia's interstate system.

The interstate planned for Virginia equated in length to a superhighway from Richmond to Des Moines, Iowa.

"We were asked to think in enormous quantities of everything - asphalt, concrete, stone, earth, rights of way," remembers Joe Ripley, retired director of planning and programming. "And everything was new. New construction standards, new safety features, new personnel - many more personnel, as well as training programs for them."

The department's response? "Everybody went gung-ho!" Ripley recounts.



*Greg Whirley*

### ***Commissioner's Column***

### **We're in a changing environment; attitude and alertness are critical**

Hearing about VDOT employees who excel always gives me a lift. That's what happened at the recent Equipment and Repair Supervisors and Managers Annual Workshop. I learned some things that impressed me, and I think they will you too.

For example, last year each district equipment shop was established as a General Motors Warranty Center, and 210 of our technicians and managers took and passed 574 certification tests.

That's not all. A featured speaker at the workshop commented, "No other organization can match the effort of VDOT in training." In fact, our technicians' training program has been honored as the best in the nation. And that's why more VDOT shops have the Blue Seal of Automotive Service Excellence than any other public sector entity in the nation.

In addition, our equipment organization also has won the "Fleet Masters" award for having the best equipment managers in private and public automotive shops. As an official of the North American Transportation Management Institute said, "VDOT is a benchmark organization. VDOT leads the nation."

Our employees have won these laurels while maintaining 32,000 pieces of equipment. They also have done this in an environment of uncertainty. As I told the participants in that meeting, "It's not your father's VDOT. Things are changing."

I'm referring, in part, to the pilot program that outsourced the work of several equipment and repair shops in a VDOT district. Yes, the private sector is challenging us. That challenge can be met, however, by a sound attitude, such as the one expressed by Tom Pruett, Salem District equipment shop. He said, "Through faith and dedication, we can make it through these changes." I agree.

Our state is trying to balance outsourcing with in-house options. We need to find that balance. In that process, I firmly believe that we need to keep in-house expertise. But this is a clear call for us to be on our toes.

In that regard, I thought John Dolce, a well-known fleet management expert at the meeting, offered this good advice. He said: "Measure what is meaningful.... Watch everything, looking for symptoms.... Pay attention to what is meaningful and leads to root-cause information."

We are dealing with public perception as well as with our own efficiency in this new environment. Here's my guidance for everyone in VDOT:

- Remember that small mistakes can erode huge accomplishments.
- Use VDOT resources wisely and appropriately.
- Be efficient in what you do.
- Stay aggressive in watching for problems.

That will go far in meeting the challenge before us. Add to all that one more thought:

Let's keep moving forward, and let's do it with integrity.

**Greg**

Greg Whirley, Commissioner

### ***Special Report***

#### ***A new approach to planning and programming***

## **VDOT unveils new project selection process**

Objective identification of transportation projects for the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is much closer to reality following two years of work led by the Transportation and Mobility Planning Division (TMPD). The effort involved local governments, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and citizens, as well as VDOT districts and divisions, to bring more transparency and collaboration to the selection of highway projects.

The outcome is a new process created by the TMPD that evaluates potential projects for the SYIP systematically, and on the basis of technical criteria, for an efficient transportation system. That process was used to identify interstate and primary highway candidate projects for SYIP 2007-2012, which is now being developed. The process follows these steps:

- VDOT identifies **long-range highway transportation needs** (for the next 20 years) for each district by combining metropolitan plans, county plans, transportation studies and VDOT field reviews. Needs, which are numerous, are consolidated into recommendations in the State Highway Plan.
- The recommendations in the State Highway Plan are categorized into "immediate," "midterm" and "long-term," based on congestion and safety concerns. Recommendations satisfying **immediate needs** become the focus of the evaluation and selection process.
- The recommendations are evaluated by VDOT planners according to performance measures assessing **five goals for potential projects**: reduce congestion; improve safety; encourage economic development; protect the environment and improve the quality of life; and preserve the highway system.
- Potential interstate and primary highway **projects are then systematically scored** according to the goals and measures.
- Candidate projects are **examined by a review team** in each VDOT district. These teams are composed of district planners, engineers and managers, and Central Office planners. These teams look at each project in light of local support, availability of funding and timing for the start of a new project phase.
- Each VDOT district administrator **presents the review team's recommendations** to the members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and reaches consensus on the candidate projects.
- The CTB **asks the public for comments** on the recommended candidate projects. VDOT hosts public meetings in each district to educate citizens and collect feedback. They began in late September and will end in November. (Obtain more information about the upcoming meetings at: <http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/pr-SYIP-Meetings-2005.asp>)
- Based on public feedback and the availability of funding, the CTB will then decide which improvements should be **added to the new SYIP**. The Programming Division, which used to coordinate the whole SYIP process, allocates available funds to the projects.

Providing objective identification of prospective improvements for the SYIP is a new role for TMPD and VDOT. The process is part of VDOT's continuing effort to streamline the project development process and improve the efficiency and accountability of the Commonwealth's transportation programs.



## **Central Office**

**Asset Management Division:** Anwar Ahmad, P.E., has been named assistant director of systems management. Ahmad started his VDOT career in Fredericksburg in 1996 by managing the district's bridge safety inspection program. He joined the Asset Management Division in 2003 and served as the bridge maintenance management engineer in the systems management section.

**Public Affairs Office:** The staff won three awards at the recent National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop, including one for VDOT's Biennial Report for 2002-2004. Chuck Armstrong, VDOT Bulletin editor, is a new grandfather with the birth Aug. 30 of a granddaughter, Lindsey Joy. Also congratulations to Nick Nicoll, Web Section, on becoming a grandfather a second time with the birth of Samuel Andrew on Sept. 28.

**Research Council:** A 2005 ASTM International Award of Merit and an accompanying title of "fellow" honor the contributions of George W. "Bill" Maupin Jr., a principal research scientist at the council. Maupin has worked with an ASTM committee on road and paving materials. The award is the highest society recognition for individual contributions to standards activities. ASTM International, originally known as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), was formed over a century ago.

**Structure and Bridge Division:** Welcome to Edward Cake, architect engineer I, who transfers from the Fredericksburg District, and congratulations to him on obtaining his P.E. license. Also welcome to William McCarthy, engineer technician III, from the Richmond District.

John Schuler, geotechnical engineer, is in the news three times this edition. He has been named as one of four core members of a National Mentoring Committee for young engineers within the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Further, he has been designated government relations representative for the Virginia State Section of ASCE. And then, and certainly more important, John and his wife, Kelly, are parents of a new daughter, Audrey May, born July 14.

Congratulations to two new grandparents: Charles E. Pettie, structural engineer supervisor, on the birth of a grandson, Christopher Scott, on Sept. 6.; and also to Conchita Chavez, engineering technician, on the birth of a granddaughter, Makena Noelle Bajet, born July 4. Congratulations also to Brett Michael Resnick, engineer technician III, and his wife, Liz, on the birth of a son, Alex Michael, born Aug. 17.

More good news from the division: Meredith Yatsko, architect engineer I, married Michael Kamprath on Aug. 13. They honeymooned in Australia, Fiji, Tonga and New Zealand.

**Transportation and Mobility Planning:** David Patton joins the division as state bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. He transfers from the Cartography Section in the Public Affairs Office. Patton says he has found his "perfect job"--for several reasons. One is his current work on a doctoral dissertation at Cambridge University on the social and cultural aspects of cycling. Among other duties, he will provide guidance and education on bicycle and pedestrian planning issues.

### ***Culpeper District***

**District Office:** Evelyn Fowler, administrative and support technician, has passed the Virginia Contracting Officer exam--on her first try!

**Louisa Residency:** Ricky D. Moore, former maintenance supervisor at Cuckoo AHQ, has been named transportation operations manager for the residency.

**Warrenton Residency:** Darryl Shifflett returns to the district from the Scheduling and Contract Division in Central Office to be engineer manager I (formerly called "assistant resident engineer for construction") in the residency.

### ***Fredericksburg District***

**Bowling Green Residency:** Phil Holmes has been promoted from transportation operator II to transportation operations manager I at Farmers AHQ. Kevin Reaves transfers from the Saluda Residency to be transportation operations manager I at the West Point AHQ.

### ***Lynchburg District***

**District Complex:** Ken Carlton, P.E., has been named district drainage engineer. He joined the VDOT staff two years ago after working as a consultant. Zack Weddle, P.E., has been selected as an area construction engineer in the district. A 19-year veteran of VDOT, Weddle served as assistant resident administrator in the Halifax Residency. He will be responsible for construction and maintenance contracts in the Halifax Residency and for others administered from the district office.

### ***Salem District***

**District Office:** Welcome to Robert "Bob" Fletcher who moved from the Central Office Drainage Section to the district Drainage Section. Chris Price has joined the Design Section as an engineering technician III after transferring from the Christiansburg Residency. Thomas "Eddie" Vaught II has joined the Dublin survey party as an engineering technician III. He comes from Wytheville Residency.

Kelly Coleman, environmental specialist, and her husband, Brad, are the proud parents of a baby boy, Grey Alexander, born Sept. 10. Congratulations, parents!

### ***Staunton District***

**Edinburg Residency:** Nathan L. Helsley has been promoted from transportation operator II at Mount Jackson AHQ to transportation operations manager I at the Edinburg sign shop.

Larry Seal, engineering technician III, and his wife, Dorothy, are becoming perennial winners in gardening competitions that judge the gardens they plant at the residency. This year, in the Keep America Beautiful landscaping campaign, Dorothy won "Outstanding Individual" for her beautiful flowers at the residency. Both Dorothy and Larry were awarded second-place honors in the "Institutional Category" for their gardens, which inspire citizens to stop by and comment on the flowers' beauty.

### ***Lorrie Ann Vaughn takes the challenges...***

## **Learn, work, prove yourself -- and do it all over again**



*Lorrie Ann Vaughn at Camp 30*

Working is just as natural as breathing for some people. For Lorrie Ann Vaughn, Camp 30 Area Headquarters, it seems to be pure oxygen.

Vaughn has climbed into drainage inlet boxes and cleaned out their dark recesses. She's pulled dead animals off the road. She's cut down trees, laid asphalt and operated highway equipment. And, when asked, she's stepped off a front-end loader and into an office job-even though she had never touched a computer before. She has learned how to manage an area headquarters office, and she's trained others around the Northern Virginia District to do the same thing.

Now an administrative support specialist at Camp 30 in the Fairfax maintenance unit, Vaughn has a reputation for tackling any job you can throw at her--and anywhere. Troy Baker, a transportation operations manager at Camp 30, hired Vaughn 13 years ago. He says now, "I'd like to have about 10 or 15 of her."

When asked about Vaughn's "work ethic," John Grether, a maintenance supervisor at Camp 30, says, "I don't think she has any other ethic. She makes my job easy." For Vaughn, a VDOT career has meant learn, work, prove yourself, get transferred--and do it all over again. And she seems quite happy about that.

In 1992, Vaughn was cleaning houses in Shenandoah County, where she lives, when a neighbor suggested a summer job at Camp 30. The cleaning job was not steady work, so she took the VDOT job and joined a road crew.

At first she was limited to flagging duties, but it wasn't very long before her crew leader realized she could, and would, handle any jobs out on the road--and keep pace with the rest of the crew. She learned to operate dump trucks, sweepers, loaders, rollers and snow plows. She was soon made a part-time employee. She continued to work hard, and one manager recalls that during snow season, after Vaughn had worked a 12-hour shift plowing the roads, she would volunteer for another six hours, or as long as she could stay alert.

"I enjoyed everything I did as an operator," Vaughn said. "Everything was a challenge, a new learning experience. It was fun." As a crew member, she thought she had found her place. "I'm an outside person. I love the outdoors," she adds. In 1993, she was made a full-time employee, but in 1999 her outdoor career with VDOT was to change drastically.

Camp 30 was losing its fiscal assistant to another unit, and knowing Vaughn's eagerness to learn, Superintendent John Ford and Supervisor Wayne Sutphin brought her into the office. She handled the change and picked up new skills quickly. She processed invoices for products and contracts, entered employees' time on projects and kept up with inventories.

***"If they need me, I'll be there to help," Vaughn says of her many transfers.***

A few months later, Vaughn had trained a new fiscal assistant and had been sent back to the field. Then, Reston AHQ needed a temporary fiscal assistant, and Vaughn was tapped once again. A short time later, Merrifield AHQ had an opening for a fiscal assistant. After each stint in the office, she was back out with the road

crew. Then in 2001, she had temporary office assignments in the Fairfax maintenance office, district procurement, public affairs and the Transportation Communications Center. Asked about any irritation over moving so frequently, she shrugged and simply replied: "If they need me, I'll be there to help."

By 2003, she had a permanent fiscal assistant's position at Merrifield AHQ, and she performed with distinction: a perfect prompt pay report and zero mistakes in the Purchase and Inventory Management System. Accolades began to accumulate for her: "Employee of the Year for Fairfax Maintenance" for 2002-2003, honorable mention for "most dependable" award for 2002, honorable mention for "outstanding performance" in the Peer Award competition for three years.

The changes did not slow down, however. She went back and forth between Merrifield and Reston in 2004 training people, and early this year, she was called back to Camp 30. Things in the office had fallen badly behind while a fiscal assistant was ill for an extended period. By June, Vaughn had worked through the deficiencies, satisfied the prompt pay requirements and set some standards. Managers decided to keep her permanently at Camp 30.

Todd Robson, manager of all three maintenance areas and one construction area in Camp 30, says Vaughn "totally recovered the way we do business, and now we're running more like a business" with precise accountability in inventory and fiscal transactions. He describes the position Vaughn holds as "the backbone of our operations in maintenance" and Vaughn as "definitely outstanding." - **by Chuck Armstrong**

## Retirements

**C. C. ADKINS**, Engineering Technician III, Chatham Residency, 37 years of service;

**WILLIAM A. BARNES**, Security Officer III, Hampton Roads Bridge, 25 years of service;

**GERALD C. BLANKENSHIP**, Engineering Technician III, Location & Design, 33 years of service;

**ROBERT J. ABRAMS**, transportation operator II, Bowling Green Residency, 32 years.

**PERRY L. ARRINGTON**, transportation operator II, Fairfax Residency, 20 years.

**CHARLES E. BROWN**, watercraft operator II, Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, 19 years.

**JAMES S. CARPENTER JR.**, transportation operations manager II, Culpeper Residency, 32 years.

**WAYLAND C. COLWELL**, engineering technician IV, Transportation and Mobility Planning Division, 33 years.

**HERBERT H. EVANS**, trades technician I, South Hill Residency, 19 years.

**B. S. HOLT**, watercraft operator I, Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, 42 years.

**SUE W. JAMES**, general administration supervisor I, Culpeper Residency, 33 years.

**LINWOOD L. JIGGETTS**, transportation operator II, Chesterfield Residency, 17 years.

**PHILLIP S. KIBLER**, engineering technician II, Manassas Residency, 15 years.

**ROBERT C. LAND**, architect/engineer I, Location & Design Division, 41 years.

**WEN Y. LIN**, architect/engineer I, Richmond District Office, 11 years.

**HUGH C. MYERS**, transportation operator II, Lexington Residency, 32 years.

**DOYLE S. PARRIS**, trainer instructor III, Suffolk District Office, 31 years.

**TALMADGE E. ROBERTSON**, transportation operator II, Martinsville Residency, 13 years.

**ANDREW A. SEE**, administration and office specialist III, Harrisonburg Residency, 32 years.

**J. K. SELF**, transportation operations manager I, Abingdon Residency, 35 years.

**JEFFREY C. SOUTHARD**, general administration manager III, Commissioner's Staff, 7 years.

**LYNNE W. SPRINKEL**, administration and office specialist III, Culpeper Residency, 12 years.

**JABE D. TURMAN**, transportation operator II, Hillsville Residency, 16 years.

**LYNN D. WAGNER**, program administration specialist III, Asset Management Division, 35 years.

**KENNETH H. WAKEMAN**, engineering technician III, Edinburg Residency, 33 years.

## Obituaries

**Harold B. Arnold**, electrician sr., Charlottesville and Culpeper shops, died Aug. 10; retired in 1995 after 38 years of service.

**Calvin R. Burrell**, 51, transportation operator II, Suffolk District office, died Aug. 15; he had 5 years of service.

**Lemuel L. Conner**, 71, equipment repair technician sr., Salem District, died July 21; retired in 1997 with 10 years of service.

**Michael Hamilton**, maintenance superintendent, Loudoun Maintenance, died in an automobile accident Aug. 11; he had 28 years of service.

**James T. Jenkins**, 95, equipment maintenance helper, Culpeper shop, died Aug. 12; retired in 1975 with 10 years of service.

**Jimmy H. Kesterson**, 61, security officer III, Charlottesville Residency, died July 29; he had 41 years of service.

**Jeannie V. Kidd**, 88, equipment operator A, Dillwyn Residency, died Aug. 9; retired in 1982 with 15 years of service.

**William J. Moon**, 91, equipment operator B, Charlottesville shop, died Aug. 12; retired in 1977 with 17 years of service.

**Oleon M. Sales**, 78, building and grounds supervisor, Lynchburg District, died July 26; retired in 1990 with 44 years of service.

**Louis B. Tingle**, 64, Lexington Residency, died July 22; retired in 1991 with 28 years of service.

**Edgar M. Turman**, 68, construction inspector sr., Christiansburg Residency, died Aug. 18; retired in 2000 with 42 years of service.

**Milton K. Wolfe Jr.**, maintenance superintendent, Edinburg Residency, died June 6; retired in 1991 with 30 years of service.



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